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NO 10
SEPT.-OCT.

Romantic Adventures

The MAGAZINE OF YOUTH AND LOVE!

10¢

I... LOVE HIM SO... BUT
I'LL ALWAYS BE THE
THIRD WHEEL IN HIS
LIFE!

In this
ISSUE:

I LOVED A STRANGER
HOBO HEARTBREAKER
SAVAGE SWEETHEART
...and other
features!





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1025 Broad St., Newark, New Jersey

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☐ I enclose \$3.98. You pay postage, plus handling.
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☐ XXXL (38-40). ☐ XXXXL (42-44).

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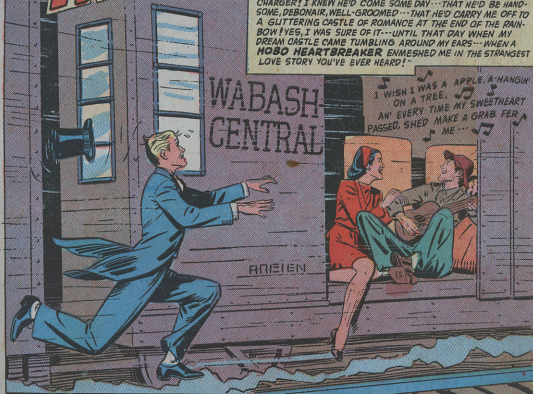
City _____ Zone _____ State _____

I understand if not delighted with the UP-LIFT ADJUST-O-BELT, I can return it, in 10 days for full purchase price refund.

SENT ON APPROVAL!

HOBBO HEARTBREAKER

"HAVEN'T WE ALL OF US OUR DREAMS...OUR DREAMS OF LOVE? YOU, READER...WHAT'S YOURS LIKE? LIKE MINE, I GUESS... FILLED WITH THRILLING VISIONS OF SOME KNIGHT ON A WHITE CHARGER! I KNEW HE'D COME SOME DAY...THAT HE'D BE HANDSOME, DEBONAIR, WELL-GROOMED...THAT HE'D CARRY ME OFF TO A GUTTERING CASTLE OF ROMANCE AT THE END OF THE RAINBOW! YES, I WAS SURE OF IT...UNTIL THAT DAY WHEN MY DREAM CASTLE CAME TUMBLING AROUND MY EARS...WHEN A HOBBO HEARTBREAKER ENMESHED ME IN THE STRANGEST LOVE STORY YOU'VE EVER HEARD!"



I WISH I WAS A APPLE, A HANGIN' ON A TREE, AN' EVERY TIME MY SWEETHEART PASSED, SHE'D MAKE A GRAB FER ME...

WABASH CENTRAL

"I'M MONA MARTIN. READER--AND MY LOVE STORY MUST START WITH MY FIRST LOVE--MUSIC! EVEN AS A CHILD, I PLANNED TO MAKE IT MY CAREER...BUT..."

MON DIEU! I AM THROUGH...SHE'LL NEVER MAKE A MUSICIAN!

THAT'S THE SIXTH MUSIC TEACHER WHO'S WASHED HIS HANDS OF YOU, MONA! I'LL NOT WASTE ANOTHER CENT ON YOUR MUSIC LESSONS!

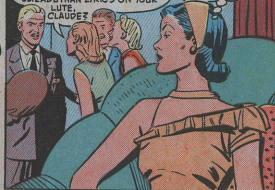
BUT... BUT I LOVE MUSIC! OH, WHAT'LL I DO?

"THE ANSWER TO THAT TORMENTING QUESTION DIDN'T COME UNTIL YEARS LATER, THEN, AT A PARTY I ATTENDED..."



HERE'S CLAUDE... HE'LL LIVEN UP THE EVENING! HOW ABOUT STRUMMING OUT SOME OF YOUR ELIZABETHAN LYRICS ON YOUR LUTE, CLAUDE?

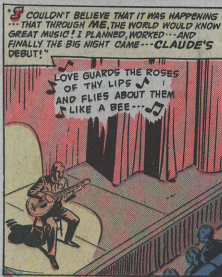
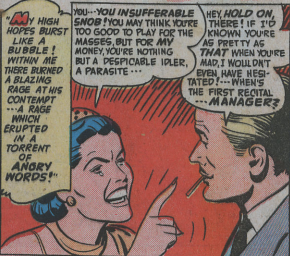
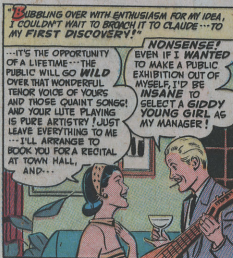
MUSICIAN...AND GOLLY, A HAND-SOME ONE, AT THAT!





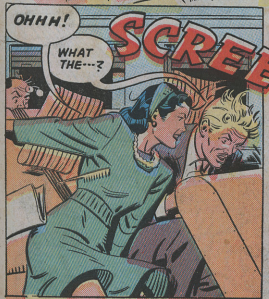
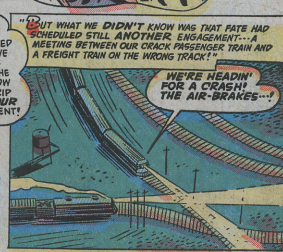
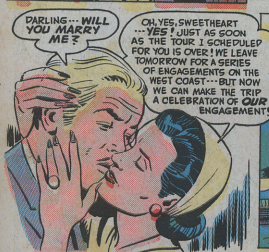
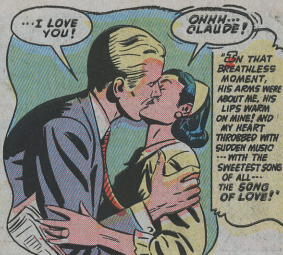
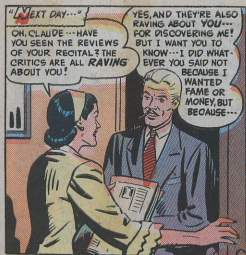
MANY A MERRY MEETING
MY LOVE AND I HAVE HAD...
SHE WAS MY ONLY SWEETING,
SHE MADE MY HEART FULL
SHE MADE MY GLAD...

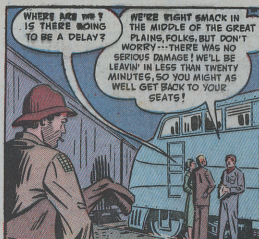
HE'S WONDERFUL...
A REAL ARTIST! IT'S
WHAT I ALWAYS
WANTED TO BE...
WAIT! I MAY BE A
POOR MUSICIAN
MYSELF, BUT I CAN
STILL MAKE A CAREER
OUT OF MUSIC--BY DIS-
COVERING OTHER
TALENT! AND I'VE
CERTAINLY JUST DIS-
COVERED **CLAUDE
GODWIN!**



"FUNDERS-
OUS APPLAUSE
...AND IT SENT
A SURGE OF TRIUMPHANT
ELATION
THROUGH
ME!! I HAD
DISCOVERED
A BRILLIANT
NEW
STAR!"





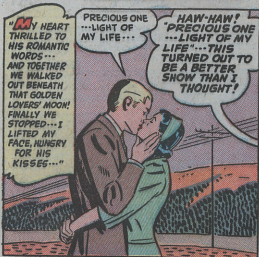


WHERE ARE WE?
IS THERE GOING
TO BE A DELAY?

WE'RE RIGHT SMACK IN
THE MIDDLE OF THE GREAT
PLAINS, FOLKS, BUT DON'T
WORRY...THERE WAS NO
SERIOUS DAMAGE! WE'LL BE
LEAVIN' IN LESS THAN TWENTY
MINUTES, SO YOU MIGHT AS
WELL GET BACK TO YOUR
SEATS!



LET'S NOT GO BACK
YET, DARLING! WE'VE GOT
TWENTY MINUTES...AND
IF WE JUST SPEND FIVE
OF THEM WALKING OUT
ONTO THE PRAIRIE, WE
CAN BE ALONE...
UNDER THE STARRY
SKY!



"MY HEART
THRILLED TO
HIS ROMANTIC
WORDS...
AND TOGETHER
WE WALKED
OUT BENEATH
THAT GOLDEN
LOVERS' MOON!
FINALLY WE
STOPPED...I
LIFTED MY
FACE, HUNGRY
FOR HIS
KISSES..."

PRECIOUS ONE
...LIGHT OF
MY LIFE...

HAW-HAW!
"PRECIOUS ONE
...LIGHT OF MY
LIFE"...THIS
TURNED OUT TO
BE A BETTER
SHOW THAN I
THOUGHT!



WHY, YOU
FILTY
TRAMP!
HOW DARE
YOU SPYON
US LIKE
THAT?

I HADDA BEAT IT OFF THAT
FREIGHT...A BRAKEMAN SPOTTED
ME! AN' THEN I SAW YA KISSIN'
HER...AN' DECIDED TA GET A LOAD
OF HOW A PANTY-WAIST LIKE YOU
PITCHES WOO!



A PANTY-
WAIST, EH?
MISTER, HERE'S
SOMETHING
ELSE I CAN
PITCH!

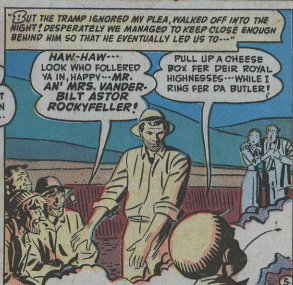
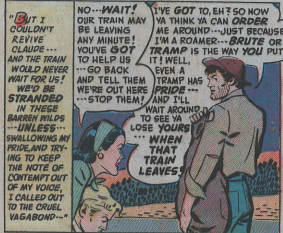
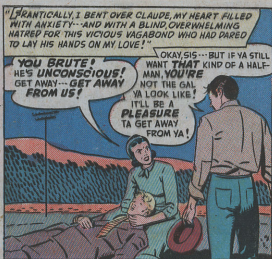
I'M GLAD THAT HOBO
HAPPENED BY...IT GIVES
ME A CHANCE TO SEE
WHAT A REAL MAN
CLAUDE IS!

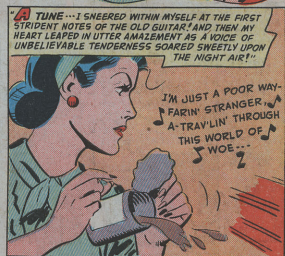
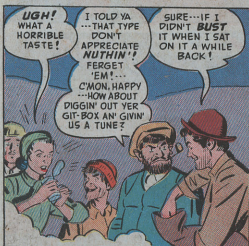
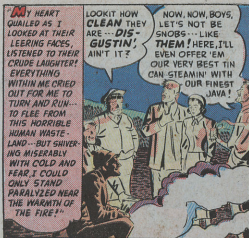
POW!

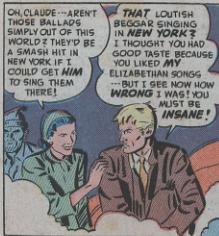


CAUGHT ME OFF BALANCE,
DURN YA...OOPS! I
LANDED ON MY GIT-
BOX!

PLUNK







OH, CLAUDE...AREN'T THOSE BALLADS SIMPLY OUT OF THIS WORLD? THEY'D BE A SMASH HIT IN NEW YORK IF I COULD GET HIM TO SING THEM THERE!

THAT LOUISIAN BEGGAR SINGING IN NEW YORK? I THOUGHT YOU HAD GOOD TASTE BECAUSE YOU LIKED MY ELIZABETHIAN SONGS...BUT I SEE NOW HOW WRONG I WAS! YOU MUST BE INSANE!



I DIDN'T STOP TO ANALYZE THE SUDDEN ANGER THAT FLARED IN MY HEART, THE SUDDEN STEELY DETERMINATION TO PROVE TO CLAUDE...TO MYSELF...THAT HERE WAS A GREAT MUSICAL FIND!

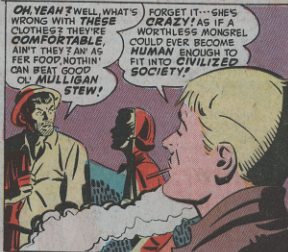
OH, IS THAT SO? WELL, I'LL SHOW YOU THAT I CAN TAKE THAT TRAMP AND HIS SONGS INTO THE SWANKIEST NEW YORK NIGHT-CLUBS AND MAKE THEM ROAR WITH APPLAUSE!



BUT...THERE WAS STILL HAPPY TO RECKON WITH!

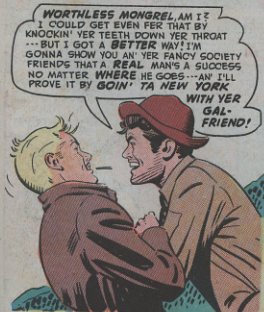
WHAT...LEAVE THE OPEN ROAD, MY FREEDOM...JUST TA SING IN SOME CRAMPED, SMOKE-FILLED NIGHT CLUB...FER A BUNCH OF STUCK-UP KNOW-NOTHIN'S? UH-UH, SISTER...NOT HAPPY BROWNE!

BUT THINK OF ALL THE THINGS YOU'LL HAVE...THE BEST CLOTHES, THE BEST FOOD THAT MONEY CAN BUY...



OH, YEAH? WELL, WHAT'S WRONG WITH THESE CLOTHES? THEY'RE COMFORTABLE, AIN'T THEY? AN' AS FER FOOD, NOTHIN' CAN BEAT GOOD OL' MULLIGAN STEW!

FORGET IT...SHE'S CRAZY! AS IF A WORTHLESS MONGREL COULD EVER BECOME HUMAN ENOUGH TO FIT INTO CIVILIZED SOCIETY!



WORTHLESS MONGREL, AM I? I COULD GET EVEN FER THAT BY KNOCKIN' YER TEETH DOWN YER THROAT...BUT I GOT A BETTER WAY! I'M GONNA SHOW YOU AN' YER FANCY SOCIETY FRIENDS THAT A REAL MAN'S A SUCCESS NO MATTER WHERE HE GOES...AN' I'LL PROVE IT BY GOIN' TA NEW YORK WITH YER GAL-FRIEND!



AND SO IT WAS THAT CLAUDE WENT ON TO THE WEST COAST ALONE...WHILE I RETURNED TO NEW YORK WITH HAPPY! BUT THERE I SOON DISCOVERED THAT MY TROUBLES HAD ONLY BEGUN!

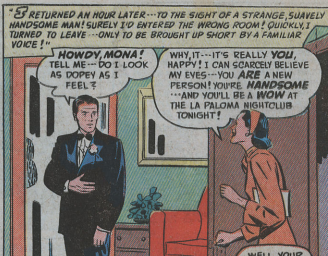
I'VE BOUGHT YOU A RAZOR TO SHAVE WITH...AND A SUIT OF THOSE ELEGANT CLOTHES I TOLD YOU ABOUT! WHEN I COME BACK, I WANT YOU TO BE ALL DRESSED UP...

WHAT...GET INTO THAT THERE MONKEY-SUIT? NOT ME...WHY, I'D CHOKE TO DEATH IN IT!



DON'T BE SILLY, HAPPY... ALL THE BEST-DRESSED MEN WEAR TUXEDOS! AND AS SOON AS YOU SHAVE AND GET CLEANED UP AND PUT ON THOSE CLOTHES, I'LL BET YOU'LL BE THE HANDSOMEST MAN IN NEW YORK! WHY, ALL THE GIRLS WILL GO WILD OVER YOU!

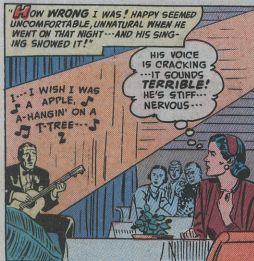
ALL THEY WILL, EH? ALL OF 'EM, YOU SAY? WELL, IN THAT CASE... I RECKON I'LL GIVE IT A TRY!



"I RETURNED AN HOUR LATER... TO THE SIGHT OF A STRANGE, SUAVELY HANDSOME MAN! SURELY I'D ENTERED THE WRONG ROOM! QUICKLY, I TURNED TO LEAVE... ONLY TO BE BROUGHT UP SHORT BY A FAMILIAR VOICE!"

HOWDY, MONA! TELL ME... DO I LOOK AS DOPEY AS I FEEL?

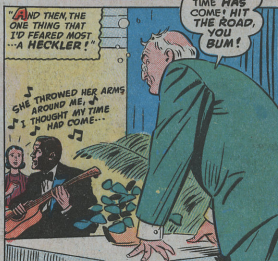
WHY, IT---IT'S REALLY YOU, HAPPY! I CAN SCARCELY BELIEVE MY EYES---YOU ARE A NEW PERSON! YOU'RE HANDSOME... AND YOU'LL BE A WOW AT THE LA PALOMA NIGHTCLUB TONIGHT!



"HOW WRONG I WAS! HAPPY SEEMED UNCOMFORTABLE, UNNATURAL WHEN HE WENT ON THAT NIGHT... AND HIS SINGING SHOWED IT!"

HIS VOICE IS CRACKING... IT SOUNDS TERRIBLE! HE'S STIFF... NERVOUS...

I... I WISH I WAS A APPLE, A-HANGIN' ON A T-TREE...



"AND THEN, THE ONE THING THAT I'D FEARED MOST... A HECKLER!"

SHE THREW HER ARMS AROUND ME, I THOUGHT ANY TIME HAD COME...

WELL, YOUR TIME HAS COME! HIT THE ROAD, YOU BUM!



I'LL HIT SOMETHIN', ALL RIGHT... BUT NOT THE ROAD!

NO, HAPPY... OHHH!



"AN HOUR LATER..." ALL RIGHT, HAPPY, COME ON! I'VE JUST BAILED YOU OUT!

GOSH, I'M SORRY I LOST MY TEMPER, MONA... BUT I JUST COULDN'T HELP MYSELF! I RECKON I JUST DON'T BELONG IN NO FANCY SOCIETY NIGHT-CLUBS! BUT IT WON'T HAPPEN AGAIN... BECAUSE THERE WON'T BE NO NEXT TIME!

I'M THROUGH WITH NEW YORK!

BUT YOU **CAN'T** GIVE UP NOW, HAPPY! THIS WAS JUST A BAD CASE OF STAGE-FRIGHT... YOU'LL GET OVER IT NEXT TIME! AND THERE'S **GOT** TO BE A NEXT TIME... BECAUSE I HAVE YOU BOOKED FOR A RECITAL AT AEOLIAN HALL TOMORROW NIGHT, AND FOR A BENEFIT CONCERT NEXT WEEK!

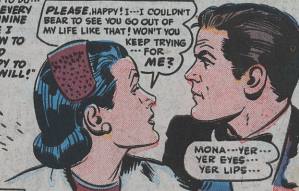
NO! I MADE A MISTAKE ONCE... AN' THAT WAS ENOUGH! I'M GOIN' BACK ON THE ROAD... **WHERE I BELONG!**



"I COULDN'T LET HIM RUIN ALL THE PLANS I'D MADE FOR HIM... I WOULDN'T LET HIM MAKE A FOOL OF ME AND FORCE ME TO ADMIT TO CLAUDE HOW WRONG I'D BEEN! THERE WAS ONLY ONE THING TO DO... USE EVERY FEMININE WILE I KNEW TO BEND HAPPY TO MY WILL!"

PLEASE, HAPPY! I... I COULDN'T BEAR TO SEE YOU GO OUT OF MY LIFE LIKE THAT! WON'T YOU KEEP TRYING... FOR ME?

MONA... YER... YER EYES... YER LIPS...



"HE STARED WONDERINGLY AT ME, AND THEN POWERFUL ARMS WERE ABOUT ME... HUNGRY LIPS PRESSING WILD, FERVENT KISSES ON MY MOUTH! FOR ONE FRIGHTENED MOMENT, I TRIED TO RESIST HIM, BUT IT WAS USELESS! I WAS SWEEPED AWAY... ON A SURGING TIDE OF RAPTURE!"

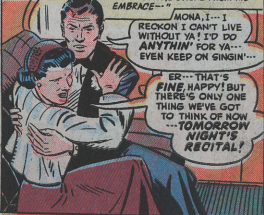
MONA... DARLIN'!



"WHY THIS BEATING OF MY HEART... WHEN MY BRAIN TOLD ME IT WAS WRONG, ALL WRONG! THIS WAS A MERE SHIFTLESS VAGABOND, AND I WAS RESPONDING TO HIS SHEER VITALITY, NOT LOVE... IT HAD TO BE THAT WAY! HASTILY, I BROKE FROM HIS EMBRACE..."

MONA, I... I RECKON I CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT YA! I'D DO ANYTHIN' FOR YA... EVEN KEEP ON SINGIN'...

ER... THAT'S FINE, HAPPY! BUT THERE'S ONLY ONE THING WE'VE GOT TO THINK OF NOW... TOMORROW NIGHT'S RECITAL!



"AEOLIAN HALL WAS THROGGED... BUT... IT HAPPENED AGAIN! THAT MELLOW VOICE, WHICH HAD RESOUNDED SO RICHLI IN THE GLEAM OF THE HOBOS' CAMPFIRE... WHERE WAS IT NOW? INSTEAD CAME NERVOUS, STIFFENED ACCENTS..."

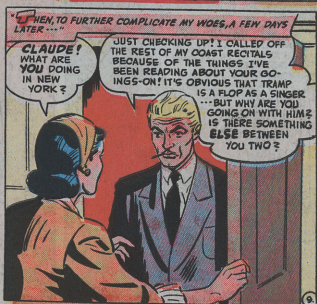
MUSIC WORLD

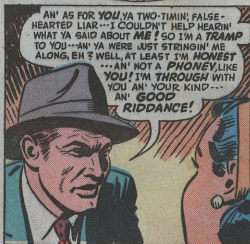
The performance last night of one Rufus Happy Browne, supposed folk song singer, was the most dismal affliction upon civilized ears since time that were wailed the songs that were old ones the horror of it all hit a new high. The ex-hobo may be happy, but we're sorry! Morphine, maestro, please!

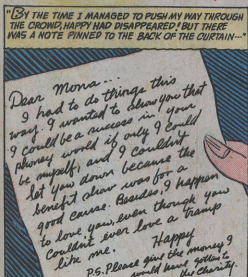
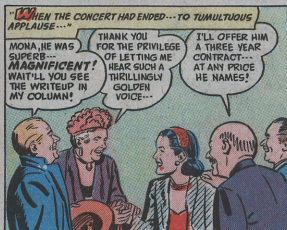
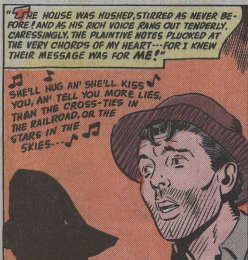
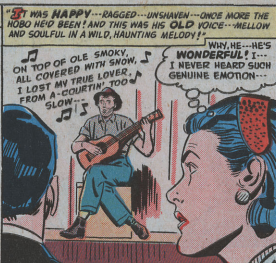
"THEN, TO FURTHER COMPLICATE MY WOES, A FEW DAYS LATER..."

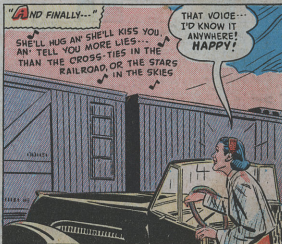
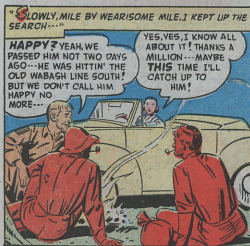
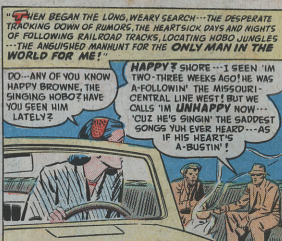
CLAUDE! WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN NEW YORK?

JUST CHECKING UP! I CALLED OFF THE REST OF MY COAST RECITALS BECAUSE OF THE THINGS I'VE BEEN READING ABOUT YOUR GOINGS-ON! IT'S OBVIOUS THAT TRAMP IS A FLOP AS A SINGER... BUT WHY ARE YOU GOING ON WITH HIM? IS THERE SOMETHING ELSE BETWEEN YOU TWO?









Love Symptoms

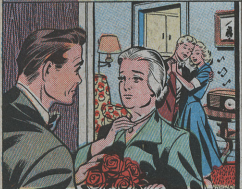
"Does he **REALLY** love me?"

Countless girls have asked themselves that question countless times-- and have always remained in doubt!

If **YOU'RE** unsure, don't torture yourself with daisy-plucking -- just see if the love of your life shows these basic **LOVE SYMPTOMS!**

HE LOVES ME...
HE LOVES
ME NOT... HE
LOVES ME...

IS HE AT LEAST A **LITTLE BIT JEALOUS**-- DOES HE PREFER YOU TO BE WITH **HIM** RATHER THAN WITH SOME OTHER MAN? IF HE ACTS INDIFFERENT WHEN YOU DATE OTHERS, THEN HE CAN'T VALUE YOUR COMPANY TOO HIGHLY-- AND IT PROBABLY ISN'T **LOVE!**



IS HE ANXIOUS FOR YOU TO MEET HIS **PARENTS**? THAT'S ONE OF THE **SUREST SYMPTOMS** OF LOVE -- BECAUSE IF HE'S PROUD ENOUGH OF YOU TO WANT TO SHOW YOU OFF TO HIS FAMILY, THEN YOU'LL PROBABLY SOON BECOME A **MEMBER OF THE FAMILY!**



IS HE CONTENT JUST TO BE WITH YOU -- TO STAY IN QUIETLY ONCE IN A WHILE JUST TO TALK AND SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS? IF HE CONSTANTLY SEEKS THE EXCITEMENT OF CROWDS AND PARTIES, THE CHANCES ARE THAT HE DOESN'T THINK OF YOU AS AN INTERESTING, EXCITING PERSON **YOURSELF**-- BUT IS DATING YOU JUST OUT OF BOREDOM!

IT'S WONDERFUL TO BE BY OURSELVES FOR A CHANGE... I FEEL CONTENTED JUST **BEING** WITH YOU!



DOES HE WANT YOU TO KNOW ALL ABOUT HIMSELF? IF HE'S SECRETIVE AND EVADES QUESTIONS ABOUT HIS PAST LIFE, THE CHANCES ARE HE DOESN'T WANT YOU TO **SHARE HIS LIFE-- FOR LOVERS HAVE NO SECRETS FROM EACH OTHER!**



IT'S STRANGE, CLAIRE-- I SUDDENLY WANT TO TELL YOU ALL ABOUT MYSELF-- ABOUT MY LIFE, MY DREAMS, MY AMBITIONS ...

AND FINALLY, HERE'S THE MOST UNMISTAKABLE **LOVE SYMPTOM** OF ALL -- WHEN HE PLEDGES TO LOVE AND CHERISH YOU **TILL DEATH DO YOU PART!**



The End

A BUNCH of VIOLETS

MARGOT dreaded the office party. Again she would be a nobody, one of the many colorless, almost anonymous, girls who were known collectively as "the secretarial staff." Again she would wear her tired navy blue dress, that had seen her through so many parties of this sort.

As Margot walked to the cafeteria where she lunched every day, her heart was rebellious. "I *hate* those parties! I don't want to go, wearing the same old thing, being the same shy, dull, retiring nobody!"

But her heart was also telling the real reason for Margot's anger. "Ralph Paton, that's who it is! The tall, sandy-haired guy who always smiles at you and holds doors open for you . . . and doesn't know or care who you are! You're afraid he'll ignore you, or, worse still . . . comment on the weather and then walk away. You couldn't *stand* that!"

Her heart was right. If only she had something good to wear! It would be fun to slip on a pretty, well-fitting, brightly-colored dress and be a butterfly. But on Margot's meagre salary, where every penny had its importance, that was impossible.

Sighing, Margot began to cross the street. And then, she stopped short. There was a flower cart, brilliant with color, parked at the curb. And there, almost alive with their beauty, were the violets . . . seventy-five cents a bunch!

Margot knew exactly how much money she had in her purse. Seventy-five cents. Just enough for lunch and a tip, with a

dime left over for carfare. Just once she said the word. *Impractical*. The flower vendor had made a sale!

Two minutes before the party, Margot pinned the bunch of violets to her drab little dress, high up at the throat. She looked in the mirror, her eyes disbelieving. For somehow, her eyes had borrowed some of the violets' dewy look, their deep, wonderful color. Her face sparkled and blushed, a smile began to form around her lips.

With her head high, Margot touched the violets once for good luck and marched through the office doors. She was going to the party.

"What are you smiling about . . . beautiful?" The last word had been spoken with a touch of surprise, a note of discovery.

"I think I'm laughing at *myself*!" Margot answered. For the first time, she had said something original, something different. And Ralph Paton *did* think she was beautiful, Margot could tell from his expression!

He was leaning over her, talking to her, asking if he could see her home. What she answered, Margot had no idea, but it must have been the right thing to say!

For Ralph was holding her hand now and saying, "When we go out together, wear the dress you're wearing. *I'll* supply the violets!" Margot looked down at her hand, almost lost in Ralph's. Funny how all at once everything had become perfect!

MY HEART was a WHIRLPOOL

YOU'RE SURE TRAVELING PLENTY TO REACH YOUR FATHER'S LUMBER CAMP, MISS! THIS REGION'S OVER A HUNDRED MILES NORTH OF THE NEAREST RAILHEAD ---AND I RECKON THERE'D BE **NO** WAY TO GET HERE IF THE COMPANY DIDN'T CHARTER MY CRAFT!

DAD'S ALWAYS WANTED ME TO VISIT THE CAMP! I FIGURED **THIS** WOULD BE MY LAST CHANCE---BECAUSE HE'S RETIRING FROM HIS JOB AS FOREMAN! HE'LL FEEL PRETTY DISMAL ABOUT LEAVING THE WOODS FOR GOOD---AND I WANT TO BE WITH HIM!

ICE CRACKLED IN THE RIVER DURING THE JOURNEY I WOULD NEVER FORGET---AND PATCHES OF SNOW GLEAMED AMONG THE SHAGGY TREES! I DIDN'T SUSPECT THAT **THIS** COULD BE THE BACKGROUND FOR WHITE-HOT TEMPER AND FLAMING JEALOUSY---UNTIL A BLAZE OF DRAMA MADE ME CHOOSE BETWEEN THE TWO MEN WHO FOUGHT FOR MY LOVE!

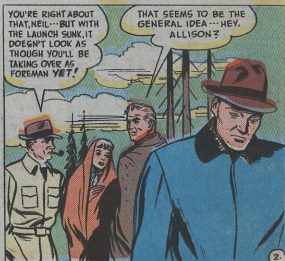
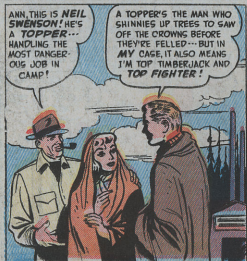
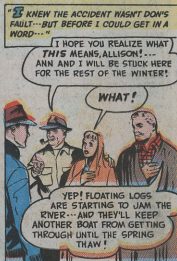
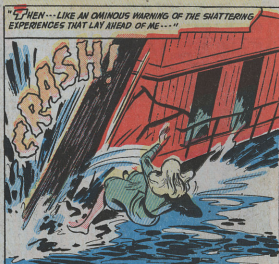
GUESS **THAT** MEANS YOU'LL BE ABOARD WHEN I HEAD DOWNRIVER TONIGHT! THIS IS MY LAST TRIP UNTIL SPRING---TOO MUCH SHALLOW WATER AND FLOATING ICE FOR WINTER NAVIGATING!

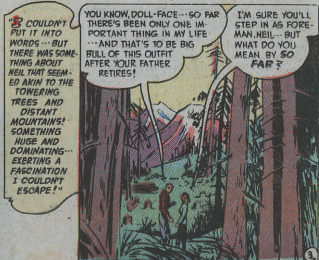
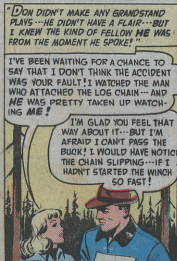
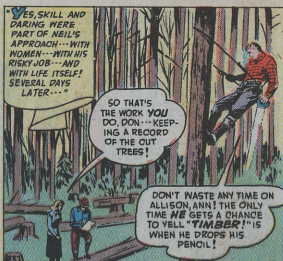
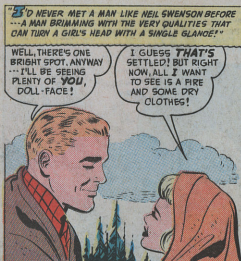
"**M**INUTES LATER---I GOT MY FIRST GLIMPSE OF THE CAMP! THE ROUGH DOCK WAS IN A FLURRY OF EXCITEMENT---AND SO WAS I---CONFRONTED BY A DOZEN STARING LUMBERJACKS!"

DAD! THERE SHE IS, BOYS! NOW'D YOU TIMBER MONKEYS LIKE A GIRL LIKE **THAT** COMING TO FETCH YOU HOME?

"**M**Y OWN GAZE WANDERED---MAYBE IT WAS BECAUSE HE SEEMED DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHERS---OR MAYBE JUST THAT HE WAS THE ONLY ONE IN THE CROWD WHO WASN'T FIXING HIS ATTENTION ON ME!"

LOG COMING UP! STAND CLEAR ON THE DOCK!



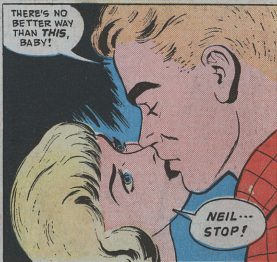


WHAT I'M TRYING TO SAY IS THAT I HAVE AN IDEA I'VE FOUND SOMETHING **ELSE** THAT'S IMPORTANT---**YOU!**

YOU'RE JUMPING THE GUN WHEN YOU SAY THINGS LIKE THAT---BUT AT LEAST IT WILL HELP US TO KNOW EACH OTHER BETTER!



THERE'S NO BETTER WAY THAN **THIS**, BABY!



NEIL---
STOP!

"FEAR MADE ME PULL AWAY---FEAR OF NEIL---AND FEAR OF WHAT I FELT IN THE SECOND HE HAD PRESSED ME TO HIM!"

MAYBE I SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE THAT, DOLL-FACE---BUT DON'T TRY TO KID ME ABOUT NOT **LIKING IT!** YOU **WANTED** TO GO FOR A WALK, DIDN'T YOU?

YES---AND I'LL **FINISH IT ALONE!** THAT GOES FOR THE REST OF THE TIME I **STAY HERE--- YOU BIG-HEADED MOOSE!**



"NEXT MORNING---"

WHY, DAD---YOU OLD SWEETHEART! WHEN DID YOU FIND TIME TO WHITTLE THESE CUTE LITTLE HEARTS?

DON'T HAND ME THAT! YOU MUST BE PRETTY SWEET ON **NEIL SWENSON** TO HAVE **HIM SIT UP ALL NIGHT---PUTTERING AROUND WITH A JACKKNIFE!**



"SNATCHING UP THE GIFT---I STOPPED SHORT SUDDENLY!"

NEIL---IMAGINE HIM---TOPPLING TREES TWENTY FEET AROUND---AND THEN PAINSTAKINGLY CARVING SOMETHING LIKE **THIS! I---I JUST CAN'T BE ANGRY WITH HIM!**



"MY HEART SORTENED---AND SO DID NEIL'S ICY BLUE EYES, WHEN WE MET OUTSIDE!"

THANKS, NEIL! AFTER THE WAY I SPOKE YESTERDAY, IT WAS AWFULLY NICE OF YOU TO DO THIS FOR ME!

IF EVERY-
THING'S FORGIVEN---
HOW ABOUT DOING SOMETHING FOR **ME?** TOMORROW'S MY AFTERNOON OFF---AND I'D LIKE TO SHOW YOU AROUND THE LOG JAM UP-RIVER!



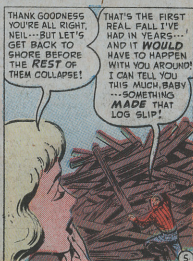
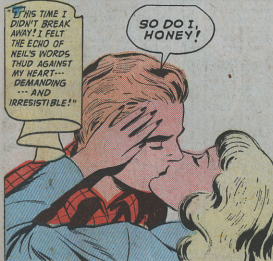
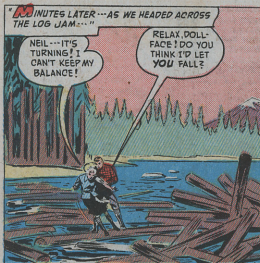
"NEXT DAY, I SAW ANOTHER SIDE OF NEIL THAT APPEALED TO ME! HE HAD AN INTENSE AMBITION---A DEVOTION TO HIS WORK---"

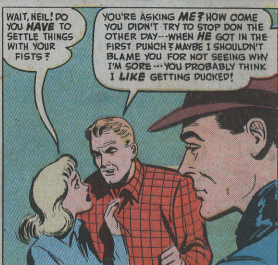
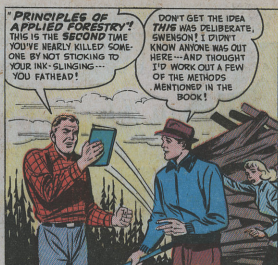


THERE'S MORE TO LUMBERJACKING THAN JUST PUTTING MUSCLE BEHIND AN AXE! WHEN I GET THAT FOREMAN'S JOB, I'M GOING TO DEEPEN THE RIVER CHANNEL---AND DO AWAY WITH THIS WINTER TIE-UP!

YOU'RE FORGETTING SOMETHING, NEIL! AFTER ALL---
THAT'S WHAT BROUGHT US TOGETHER!







I NEVER EXPECTED TO GET A GOOD LEAD FROM A MUGG LIKE NEIL---BUT NOW THAT HE'S PLOPPED OUT OF THE PICTURE, SUPPOSE WE DO START SEEING PLENTY OF EACH OTHER?



I'D HATE TO MAKE NEIL JEALOUS, DON---BUT WHY NOT? THAT'S HIS LOOKOUT!

"STRANGE THAT WINTER SHOULD SETTLE DOWN IN EARNEST DURING THE NEXT FEW WEEKS---WHILE MY HEART THAWED MORE AND MORE EACH MOMENT I SPENT WITH DON!"



SILLY---THAT'S SUPPOSED TO BE NEIL! WHAT'S THE BOTTLE FOR?

I GUESS YOU HAVEN'T HEARD MUCH CAMP GOSSIP LATELY, ANN---BUT THIS IS ONE OF THE BOTTLES NEIL'S EMPTIED!

"A FEW DAYS LATER---"

DARLING, WHAT MADE YOU THINK OF THIS ---AFTER WALKING AROUND FOR AN HOUR TRYING TO FIND SOMETHING?

THERE'S WHAT I WAS LOOKING FOR, BABY---MISTLETOE!



"SHARING DON'S FREE TIME, IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE I WAS SHARING HIS PLANS ---ABOUT THE FUTURE!"

I'M NO BUG ABOUT THE GREAT OUTDOORS, ANN---BUT I'VE GOT HOPES THAT I'M PICKING UP EXPERIENCE FOR AN EXECUTIVE JOB WITH A LARGE LUMBER COMPANY! ANYWAY---IT GIVES ME SOMETHING TO DREAM ABOUT!



I HAVEN'T HAD TO DREAM LATELY! IT'S ENOUGH JUST TO BE AWAKE---AND ALIVE---AROUND YOU!

THINK YOU'LL STILL FEEL THAT WAY---WHEN I FINALLY LAND THAT JOB?

DARLING---JUST AS LONG AS IT DOESN'T TAKE MORE THAN TEN MILLION YEARS!



"ONE NIGHT, THE ENTIRE CAMP WAS INVITED TO A NEARBY INDIAN RESERVATION---TO TAKE PART IN THEIR ANNUAL "POTLATCH" CELEBRATION!"

WISH I COULD GUESS WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND, HONEY!

CAN'T YOU? I WAS JUST THINKING THAT THE LUCKIEST MOMENT OF MY LIFE WAS WHEN THAT LAUNCH SANK!



"B FELT THIS WAS A NIGHT I'D ALWAYS REMEMBER---AND I DIDN'T REALIZE HOW TRAGICALLY RIGHT I WAS!"

PICK IT UP, YOU TWO! WE'LL SHOW 'EM HOW TO SQUARE DANCE---HEY, BELLITA?

YOU BETCHA!

DUCK FOR THE OYSTER DIVE FOR THE CLAM, ALL HANDS AROUND---AND START AGAIN!



"SUDDENLY---NEIL REELED FORWARD AT ONE SIDE OF THE DANCE FLOOR!"

YAHOOO! CROWD AROUND FOR YOUR POISON, BOYS--- AND LET'S GET A LITTLE LIFE INTO THIS HOWDOWN!

QUIET DOWN, SWENSON---AND PUT THAT BOTTLE AWAY! YOU **KNOW** LIQUOR ISN'T ALLOWED ON THE RESERVATION!

DON, I WISH YOU'D GET THAT BOTTLE! IT'LL BE A LOT EASIER TO BE DIPLOMATIC ABOUT IT NOW THAN LATER--- WHEN NEIL'S HAD A FEW MORE DRINKS!

WHY WORRY ABOUT IT, HONEY? IF SWENSON WANTS TO MAKE A FOOL OF HIMSELF--- I'M NOT GOING TO STOP HIM!

"AN HOUR LATER---"

I'M TOP LUMBERJACK IN THESE WOODS---AND BLACK ELK'S TOP PISTOL SHOT! WATCH HIM BUST THE BOTTLE!

THIS HAS GONE FAR ENOUGH! BLACK ELK---TAKE THAT GUN OUT OF HERE!

GOOD HEAVENS---DAD!

CRACK!
BANG!

"ROMANCE---THE SCORING RAPTURE OF BEING IN LOVE---WHAT DID ANY OF IT MEAN NOW---AS I WATCHED MY FATHER BEING CARRIED OUT?"

GOSH, ANN---I'D HAVE RATHER STOPPED A BULLET MYSELF THAN SEE THAT HAPPEN! I'M SORRY, DOLL-FACE---I SHOULD HAVE LISTENED!

YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE **PLENTY** TO BE SORRY FOR, SWENSON---IF THE CAMP DOCTOR DOESN'T MANAGE TO PULL JIM LESLIE THROUGH! YOU'VE BEEN ITCHING TO ATTRACT ANN'S ATTENTION ONE WAY OR ANOTHER---AND **THIS TIME IT BACK-FIRED!**

"I HAD EXPECTED DON'S LOVE TO SHIELD AND PROTECT ME---AND NOW I STOOD DAZED---QUIVERING WITH SHOCK!"

YOU'RE NO ONE TO TALK! THIS COULD HAVE BEEN PREVENTED IF YOU'D TAKEN THE BOTTLE FROM NEIL WHEN I ASKED YOU TO!

HONEY, I KNOW YOU'RE UPSET---BUT GET HOLD OF YOURSELF! DON'T TAKE IT OUT ON ME!

AND WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO---PAT YOU ON THE BACK BECAUSE YOU'RE **AFRAID** OF NEIL?

I'D BE WILLING TO PROVE YOU'RE WRONG, ANN---EXCEPT **THAT'S** THE VERY THING YOU SEEM TO WANT! I NEVER HAD ANY TROUBLE WITH NEIL UNTIL **YOU** CAME---AND I'M BEGINNING TO THINK YOU **LIKE** THE IDEA OF TWO MEN SLUGGING IT OUT FOR **YOU!**

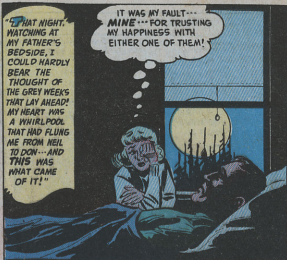
"I DIDN'T STOP TO THINK THAT DON WAS UPSET, TOO! LIKE A WOUNDED CREATURE TRYING TO COVER ITS TRACKS, I STIFLED THE LAST TRACE OF OUR LOVE!"

THAT'S WHAT YOU THINK... IS IT? WELL, YOU TWO CAN BE BOGOM BUDDIES FROM NOW ON!... BECAUSE I'M THROUGH WITH BOTH OF YOU!



"THAT NIGHT, WATCHING AT MY FATHER'S BEDSIDE, I COULD HARDLY BEAR THE THOUGHT OF THE GREY WEEKS THAT LAY AHEAD! MY HEART WAS A WHIRLPOOL THAT HAD FLUNG ME FROM NEIL TO DON... AND THIS WAS WHAT CAME OF IT!"

IT WAS MY FAULT... MINE... FOR TRUSTING MY HAPPINESS WITH EITHER ONE OF THEM!



THE WINTER DREPT ON... I TAKING CARE OF DAD... AND DON WORKING AS ACTING FOREMAN! NEIL BROODED AND CONTINUED DRINKING... SEETHING OVER THE FACT THAT HE HAD LOST BOTH THE FOREMAN'S JOB... AND ME! I WATCHED THEM BOTH FROM THE SHADOW OF MY OWN LONELINESS... HUNGERING FOR THE COMPANIONSHIP THAT EITHER ONE OF THEM COULD GIVE... AND YET BRIBADING TO MAKE A CHOICE!"

"DAD'S RECOVERY WAS SLOW... BUT THAT'S NOT THE ONLY THING I WORRIED ABOUT!"

DON'S GOT A LOT TO LEARN, ANN... BUT HE'S A BORN LUMBERMAN! HE'S BEEN KEEPING UP THE CAMP QUOTA LIKE A VETERAN!

NEIL WOULD HAVE TO PASS BY JUST IN TIME TO HEAR THAT! THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT HIS EXPRESSION I DON'T LIKE... SOMETHING I'M AFRAID OF!



"WITH SPRING COMING ON, DON WAS BOGGED DOWN WITH ENDLESS DETAILS! I DECIDED TO GIVE HIM A HAND... TELLING MYSELF IT WOULD MAKE DAD FEEL BETTER!"

LET'S SEE THAT TALLY BOOK ENTRY AGAIN, DON! I WANT TO BE SURE I DON'T MAKE A MISTAKE!

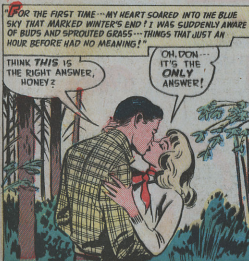
LOOK, SWEETHEART... DON'T YOU THINK A MISTAKE HAS BEEN MADE? SUPPOSE WE WORK THAT OUT TOGETHER?



FOR THE FIRST TIME... MY HEART SOARED INTO THE BLUE SKY THAT MARKED WINTER'S END! I WAS SUDDENLY AWARE OF BUDS AND SPROUTED GRASS... THINGS THAT JUST AN HOUR BEFORE HAD NO MEANING!"

THINK THIS IS THE RIGHT ANSWER, HONEY?

OH, DON... IT'S THE ONLY ANSWER!

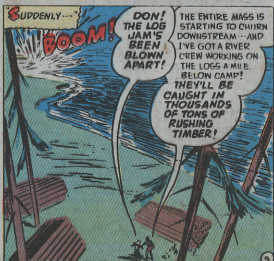


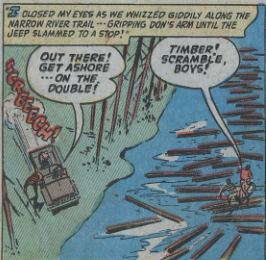
SUDDENLY...!

BOOM!

DON! THE LOG JAM'S BEEN BLOWN APART!

THE ENTIRE MASS IS STARTING TO CHURN DOWNSTREAM... AND I'VE GOT A RIVER CREW WORKING ON THE LOGS A MILE BELOW CAMP! THEY'LL BE CAUGHT IN THOUSANDS OF TONS OF RUSHING TIMBER!





THERE'S A LUMBERJACK, ANN! OUT OF ALL THOSE HUNDREDS OF LOGS---HE'S SPOTTED THE ONES THAT WILL SNARL UP THE OTHERS!

AND IT'S WORKING! THE WHOLE PILE HAS SLOWED DOWN!



"THEN, JUST AS I CLASPED DON'S HAND--- CERTAIN THE DANGER WAS OVER ---"

GREAT GUNS--- HE'LL SINK LIKE A ROCK!



HE'LL BE GROUND TO A PULP---AND THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO ABOUT IT! THOSE LOGS, CHURNING UNDER THE SURFACE WOULD MAKE IT SUICIDE TO DIVE IN!

DON--- NO! YOU CAN'T!

DARLING, LISTEN TO ME! THOSE MEN ARE EXPERIENCED LUMBERJACKS---THEY KNOW WHAT IT WILL MEAN!

I MAY NOT BE A LUMBERJACK, HONEY, BUT I AM FOREMAN---AND WHAT MATTERS TO ME IS THAT ONE OF MY MEN NEEDS HELP! THIS TIME IT ISN'T A QUESTION OF KNOW-HOW---AND I'M GOING AHEAD!



WHETHER I LIVED AND BREATHED DURING THE NEXT TWO MINUTES, I'LL NEVER KNOW! I WAS ONLY AWARE OF THE TWO FORMS BOBBING IN THE RACING WATER--- AND MY OWN CHOKED VOICE!

OH, DARLING --- BE CAREFUL --- BE CAREFUL!

HE DID IT! YOU CAN RELAX, SISTER --- THEY'RE SAFE!



"NEXT DAY---" IT MAY NOT HELP MUCH AFTER YESTERDAY--- BUT I'M THROUGH DRINKING ON THE JOB! I WON'T HAVE TO NOW--- BECAUSE THERE'S NOTHING TO STEW ABOUT! DON'S SHOWN ME THAT HE'S THE MAN FOR ANN---AND I GUESS HE RATES AS FOREMAN, TOO!

NEIL--- DON LANDED THAT JOB WITH THE LUMBER COMPANY--- AND HE'S LEAVING WITH US NEXT WEEK! SOMEONE'S GOT TO TAKE OVER---AND I FIGURE IT MIGHT AS WELL BE AN ACE TIMBERJACK WHOSE ONE FAULT IS THAT HE TAKES CERTAIN THINGS A LITTLE HARD! NOT THAT I MEAN YOU'LL BE ABLE TO TAKE THINGS EASY FROM NOW ON--- FOREMAN!



"MANY THINGS CAME TO AN END THAT SPRING DAY WE LEFT THE CAMP, BUT THE MAIN THING BEGAN--- BECAUSE DON AND I MARRIED A MONTH LATER!"

GOODBYE, NEIL!--- DARLING, I'M GLAD WE COULD LEAVE HIM THIS WAY--- HAPPY WITH THE THING THAT MEANS MOST TO HIM!

SO AM I, BABY --- BECAUSE I KNOW JUST WHAT IT FEELS LIKE!



THE END!

AWAKENING

THERE is no mystery in a man you've known all your life, Louise mused as she watched Jack add some charcoal to the outdoor grill. You don't have to weave fancies about him, imagine how he would act or what he would say under certain conditions. You *know*!

There was Jack, for instance. Louise knew he was a mechanical genius, played a fair game of golf and a mean guitar, made clever jokes and was kind and considerate. All very nice, but nothing to do with romance! For how could you dream romantically about a man you'd known forever?

So, as the crowd sat around the fire, watching the steaks sputter and turn brown, Louise allowed her mind to roam as her eyes roamed across the sandy beach to the white-capped breakers. Without being aware of it, she sighed wistfully. Wouldn't it be wonderful to be sitting close to someone special, someone whose nearness was thrilling? Wouldn't it be exciting to . . .

"Louise! I need your help!" That was Jack, calling her back to reality and the beach party.

"Name it!" Louise smiled.

"Well, we're starting a round of charades," Jack explained, "and I need a partner. Lunt and Fontanne, Gable and Grable . . . you know!"

Louise uncrossed her legs and stood up. "Glad to oblige," she said. "Would you like Ophelia's mad scene from 'Hamlet'? Or are we supposed to sing a duet?"

"You're getting warm," Jack grinned.

"As a matter of fact, this charade demands great acting from you. I need a girl . . . to *kiss*!"

Strange . . . they had known each other so long and had never kissed. Well, that had to happen too, between old friends. Louise winked at Jack and said, "I'll make it as convincing as I can."

She was entirely matter-of-fact as she raised her lips to his. For there is no mystery in a man you've known all your life, is there? And besides, this was only part of a game.

Then it happened! Almost as though the entire world had been capsized . . . as though the ocean were pounding in her ears . . . as though there were only two people in the entire universe . . . just Jack and Louise!

Someone called out the answer to the charade and the crowd applauded. Another couple began to act out some silly slogan. But Jack and Louise continued to look at each other, shaken and exhilarated.

Silently, they moved down to the water's edge. Without a word, they turned to each other, reached for each other. Again they kissed and again the miracle happened! As Jack released her reluctantly, he appeared almost a stranger, someone she had met for the first time.

"Darling, it's love," he said, and even his voice sounded new and different.

"I . . . I feel as though I've just awakened from a long, long sleep," Louise said shakily.

Jack's reply was soft and gentle. "You have," he said.

I loved a STRANGER

GOIN' OUT SPOONIN' WITH ORVIE CLANTON AGAIN, EH? DON'T YOU THINK IT'S TIME HE STARTED GETTIN' SERIOUS, DAUGHTER --- AFTER COURTIN' YOU FOR SIX MONTHS?

STOP WORRYING, PA --- AT EIGHTEEN, I'M NOT AN OLD MAID YET! THERE'S A HEAP OF DIFFERENCE BETWEEN **LIKING** ORVIE AND WANTING TO **MARRY** HIM!

YOU'RE POWERFUL PARTICULAR, BETTY LOU! ORVIE'S PLOWED A STRAIGHT FURROW ALL HIS LIFE --- AND HE COMES FROM GOOD STOCK! JUST LOOK AT WHAT HIS FATHER, OLD RAFE CLANTON, HAS MANAGED TO DO!

MY STARS --- CAN'T YOU FORGET THAT RAFE OWNS TWO HUNDRED ACRES THAT ORVIE WILL INHERIT SOME DAY? SURE, RAFE'S THE BIGGEST LANDOWNER IN SINGING BROOK --- BUT EVERYONE KNOWS HE GOT MOST OF HIS PROPERTY CHEAPLY WHEN JESSE DAVIS'S ACRES WERE SOLD FOR TAXES TWENTY YEARS AGO!



WELL, I WASN'T SURE HOW I FELT ABOUT ORVIE --- BUT THERE WAS SOMETHING ABOUT THE SIGHT OF HIM, WAITING FOR ME BESIDE THE WILLOW-BORDERED BROOK, THAT MADE MY HEART SKIP!"

ORVIE, HONEY! YOU BEEN WAITING LONG?

JUST ONE LITTLE MINUTE WOULD BE TOO LONG TO WAIT FOR **YOU**, SUGAR!



IF ONLY MY FAMILY WOULD STOP PRODDING ME ABOUT MARRYING ORVIE! IF ONLY THEY'D LET ME MAKE UP MY OWN MIND DURING MOMENTS LIKE **THIS** --- WHEN HIS ARMS WERE AROUND ME!"

THIS'LL SHOW YOU HOW IT'S GOIN' TO FEEL TO BE LIFTED ACROSS THE THRESHOLD OF A NEW HOUSE ONE OF THESE DAYS --- A HOUSE BELONGIN' TO ORVIE CLANTON AND HIS MISSUS!

OH, ORVIE --- YOU MUSTN'T TALK THAT WAY! I SWEAR I GET ALL FLUTTERY!



TRADITION SAID THAT THE FEW STRANGERS WHO CAME TO THE ISOLATED OZARK VILLAGE OF SINGING BROOK SHOULD BE GIVEN NOTHING BUT DISTRUST --- AND YET **BETTY LOU TYLER** GAVE A STRANGER HER HEART! READ HOW IT HAPPENED IN HER OWN MURMURING PHRASES --- THE WORDS OF A GIRL WHOSE LOVE REACHED NEW HEIGHTS OF TENDERNESS AND HATRED --- AND SPANNED EVERY EXPERIENCE FROM WHISPERED ROMANCE TO CRASHING DRAMA!

HOW ABOUT SWAPPIN'
ME, SWEETZININ'---
THIS FLOWER FOR
A KISS?

THAT'S A FAIR TRADE---IF YOU
DON'T MIND SPENDING THE
REST OF THE DAY PICKING
FLOWERS!



BUT AT THE INSTANT OUR EAGER LIPS TOUCHED---



I MIGHT'VE KNOWN!
IT'S THAT BIG-HEADED
STRANGER WHO'S BEEN
HANGIN' AROUND SINGIN'
BROOK FOR THE PAST
THREE WEEKS!

GOSH, FELLA ---
SORRY I HOOKED
YOU! THE WIND
LIFTED MY LINE
RIGHT OVER
THOSE
BRANCHES!



MY NAME'S **BOB
PRESCOTT!** DO
YOU HAPPEN TO
HAVE THE TIME
ON YOU?



FOLKS LIKE US DON'T
CARRY WATCHES,
MISTER! AND EVEN
IF WE **DID**--- WE
WOULDN'T GIVE
THE RIGHT TIME
TO AN OUTSIDER!

THEN I'D ADVISE
YOU TO GO THE
WHOLE WAY,
BUG---AND HOLD
ON TO YOUR
LIP!

STEP BACK A
TRIFLE, BETTY
LOU! I'M GOIN'
TO SHOW HIM
WHAT HAPPENS
TO SMART ALECK
STRANGERS
AROUND SINGIN'
BROOK!



IT HAPPENED BEFORE I HAD
TIME TO GASP---THE FLASH OF
ORVIE'S FIST---AND THEN---

MAYBE FROM NOW ON
THEY'LL CALL IT
**SWINGING
BROOK!**



ORVIE DARLING---
PLEASE! THIS HAS
GONE FAR
ENOUGH!

THAT DEPENDS ON **HIM!**
IF HE'S WILLING TO LET IT
DROP, I'LL BE GLAD TO
DRIVE YOU TWO
HOME!





ORVIE, LOOK---IT IS A SURE-ENOUGH AUTOMOBILE! GEE WILLIERS, MISTER---CAN I SIT IN FRONT?

WAIT UP---DID YOU ASK ME? IF I'M NOT GOIN', YOU'RE NOT GOIN'!... AND YOU'D BETTER GET USED TO THAT RIGHT FAST!



"IT DIDN'T OCCUR TO ME TO DISOBEY ORVIE! THAT WAS PART OF BEING IN LOVE---IN SINGING BROOK!"

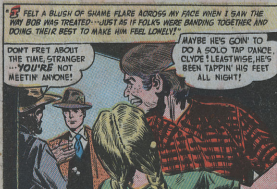
YOU SEEM PRETTY SET ON GOIN' PLACES, STRANGER? WELL, TAKE MY ADVICE---AND ORVIE THAT CHR CLEAN OUT OF THESE MOUNTAINS!



"MAYBE BECAUSE IN MY HEART I KNEW HOW ORVIE WOULD STACK UP IN COMPARISON, I MANAGED TO FORGET ABOUT THE STRANGER UNTIL A WEEK LATER--- WHEN ORVIE TOOK ME TO A DANCE AT THE GRANGE HALL!"

THERE'S BOB PRESOOTT! HE CAN'T BE HAVING MUCH FUN HERE... WITHOUT A GIRL!

EXCUSE ME, MISTER! CAN YOU TELL ME THE TIME?



"I FELT A BLUSH OF SHAME FLARE ACROSS MY FACE WHEN I SAW THE WHY BOB WAS TREATED---JUST AS IF FOLKS WERE BANDING TOGETHER AND DOING THEIR BEST TO MAKE HIM FEEL LONELY!"

DON'T FRET ABOUT THE TIME, STRANGER... YOU'RE NOT MEETIN' ANYONE!

MAYBE HE'S GOIN' TO DO A SOLO TAP DANCE. CLYDE! LEASTWISE, HE'S BEEN TAPPIN' HIS FEET ALL NIGHT!



"I TRIED TO GET BOB OUT OF MY MIND AS ORVIE HELD ME CLOSE DURING OUR FIRST DANCE---AND THEN---"

PSSST! HEY, ORVIE---HOW ABOUT IT?

THERE'S SOMETHIN' I'VE BEEN THIRSTIN' FOR, SUGAR! CAN'T SEEM TO MAKE MY FEET BEHAVE UNTIL I'VE HAD A SNORT!



ORVIE, I WISH YOU WOULDN'T DRINK TONIGHT! ISN'T IT ENOUGH TO JUST BE TOGETHER?

TUH-TUT, DUMPLIN'! LET'S GET OFF TO THE RIGHT START--AND DON'T TRY TO ORDER ME AROUND!

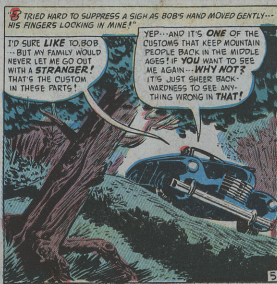
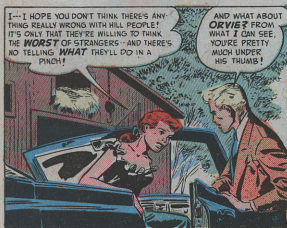


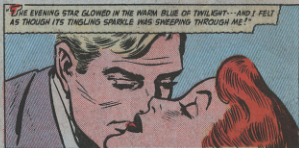
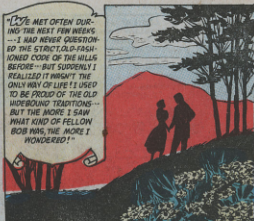
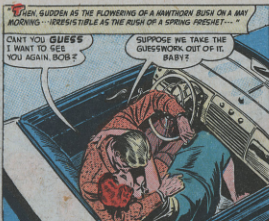
"A WAVE OF REBELLION SURGED THROUGH ME AS ORVIE STRODE OFF! I COULDN'T EVEN ASK HIM NOT TO DO SOMETHING---BUT HE THOUGHT HE COULD BOSS ME! ACTING ON IMPULSE---I WALKED TOWARD BOB!"

WHAT TIME IS IT? WHAT'S WRONG WITH LOOKIN' AT THE CLOCK, STRANGER?

I HADN'T NOTICED THERE WAS ONE! SORRY TO TROUBLE YOU!









I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING WRONG! I DIDN'T!

PRESCOTT, MY PA AND GRANDPA KILLED MANY A MAN FOR A HEAP LESS'N THIS! IF I CATCH YOU MEDDLIN' WITH BETTY LOU AGAIN...YOU'LL LEARN WHAT IT MEANS TO CROSS A CLANTON!

I'M READY TO HAVE IT OUT NOW! LET'S SEE YOU DROP THAT SHOTGUN!



PA...WAIT! PLEASE, BOB...DO WHAT THEY SAY! AND DARLING...IF I NEVER SEE YOU AGAIN, IT'S BECAUSE I LOVE YOU TOO MUCH TO PUT YOUR LIFE IN DANGER!

IF IT MEANS YOUR PEACE OF MIND, BETTY LOU...I GUESS THAT'S THE WAY IT'S GOT TO BE! BUT THE DAY IT'S COMING WHEN I'LL BE READY TO FIGHT FOR WHAT IS MINE...AND THEN NOTHING WILL KEEP ME FROM YOU!

"A LONG AND BITTER MONTH CREPT BY...I TRIED TO PRETEND THAT MEETING BOB WAS JUST A DREAM...A SONG THAT WAS NEVER REALLY HEARD...A SUN THAT NEVER REALLY SHONE..."



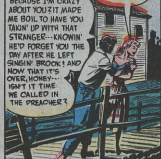
THE GALS' BROODIN' AND PININ' ALL DAY LONG, BENNY...JUST FRETtin' HER HEART AWAY FOR THAT STRANGER!

SHE'LL GET OVER IT! TYLER WOMEN FOLKS ALWAYS DO!

"ORVIE DID HIS BEST TO PATCH THINGS UP...AND IN A WAY, I WELCOMED HIS VISITS! BUT FOR HIM THERE WAS NO WELCOME IN MY HEART...NO WORDLESS INVITATION IN MY EYES!"

DUMPLIN', I'M POWERFUL SORRY ABOUT THE WAY I ACTED...BUT CAN'T YOU SEE IT WAS JUST BECAUSE I'M CRAZY ABOUT YOU? IT MADE ME BOIL UP WITH THAT STRANGER...KNOWIN' HE'D FORGET YOU THE DAY AFTER HE LEFT SINGIN' BROOK! AND NOW THAT IT'S OVER, HONEY...ISN'T IT TIME WE CALLED IN THE PREACHER?

MAYBE SO, ORVIE! BUT NOT RIGHT AWAY...NOT FOR A WHILE!



"FINALLY, ONE EVENING...WHEN THE DISTANT CALL OF A WHIPPOORWILL SOUNDED LIKE THE ECHO OF MY OWN LONGING...I STROLLED RESTLESSLY INTO THE WOODS!"



"NOW THAT IT'S OVER...I'LL LET ORVIE THINK SO...BUT IT'LL NEVER BE OVER...NEVER AS LONG AS I LIVE!"

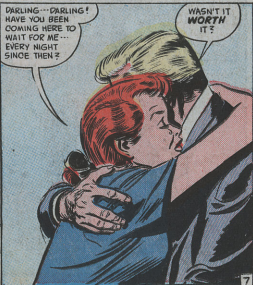
"I DIDN'T REALIZE I'D BEEN WANDERING TOWARD THE OLD FALLEN TREE...NOT UNTIL I SAW HIM...NOT UNTIL MY CHOKED VOICE CALLED OUT HIS NAME OVER AND OVER!"



BOB! OH, BOB...BOB!

TAKE IT EASY, SWEETHEART! AFTER ALL THESE WEEKS...A FEW MORE SECONDS SHOULDN'T MATTER!

DARLING...DARLING! HAVE YOU BEEN COMING HERE TO WAIT FOR ME...EVERY NIGHT SINCE THEN?



WASN'T IT WORTH IT?

"FOR A MOMENT, WE STOOD TOGETHER SILENTLY---CONTENT TO BE CLOSE IN THE STIRRING TWILIGHT! AND WHEN BOB SPOKE---I WAS BREATHLESSLY SURE OF WHAT WAS ON HIS MIND!"

BABY, I WASN'T SURE I'D GET A CHANCE---BUT THERE'S SOMETHING I'VE BEEN WANTING TO ASK YOU ABOUT!

BOB, HONEY---YOU KNOW WHAT MY ANSWER WILL BE! MARRY ME, DARLING---TAKE ME AWAY FROM SINGING BROOK!



THAT'S STILL GOT TO WAIT, BETTY LOU! I WAS JUST WONDERING HOW MUCH YOU KNOW ABOUT THE CLANTONS---WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE THEY ARE!

THE CLANTONS! IS THAT ALL YOU'VE GOT ON YOUR MIND AFTER NOT SEEING ME FOR OVER A MONTH---ORVIE? IF YOU'RE JEALOUS---WHY DON'T YOU COME RIGHT OUT AND SAY SO?



"IT WAS LIKE A DASH OF COLD WATER! KNOWING THE WAY I FELT ABOUT BOB, I EXPECTED HIM TO BE SURE OF WHERE HE STOOD WITH ME---NOT WASTING THE MOMENTS I'EARNED FOR ON SILLY QUESTIONS ABOUT ORVIE CLANTON!"

GIVE ME A CHANCE TO EXPLAIN, SUGAR! I KNOW FOLKS AROUND HERE HAVE A TENDENCY TO LEAP TO CONCLUSIONS---BUT I DIDN'T THINK I'D RUN ACROSS IT IN YOU!

NO? WELL, I'M JUST LIKE EVERYONE ELSE IN SINGING BROOK---AND RIGHT PROUD OF IT! IT'S EASY ENOUGH FOR A STRANGER TO CRITICIZE---BUT OUR KIND OF FOLKS STAY THE WAY THEY ARE!



I SEE---IN THAT CASE---YOU SHOULD BE SATISFIED WITH ORVIE!

I HAVEN'T TRIED TO BE, YET---BUT MAYBE I WILL! I HATE YOU!



"A FEW MINUTES LATER---WHEN I REACHED HOME---"

ORVIE! GOLLY, I---I DIDN'T EXPECT YOU!

YOU'VE BEEN CRYIN'---SOMETHIN'S HAPPENED! I'M GOIN' TO ASK YOU PLAIN, BETTY LOU---HAS THAT STRANGER BEEN FRETtin' YOU UP AGAIN?



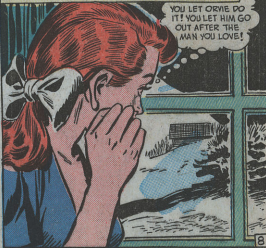
I'VE GOT NOTHING TO CONCEAL, HONEY! YES, I DID SEE BOB PRESCOTT---BUT YOU'VE GOT NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT---BECAUSE I'M THROUGH WITH HIM!

I'LL SEE TO THAT, SUGAR---JUST TO MAKE SURE HE KNOWS IT!

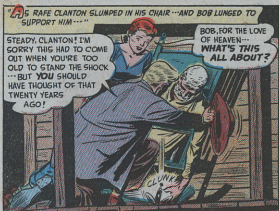


"WITH OUR QUARREL STILL SEETHING INSIDE ME, I DECIDED NOT TO INTERFERE! BUT A VOICE KEPT WHISPERING DURING AN HOUR OF TORTURED WAITING---THE VOICE OF A HEART I COULDN'T DECEIVE!"

YOU LET ORVIE DO IT! YOU LET HIM GO OUT AFTER THE MAN YOU LOVE!



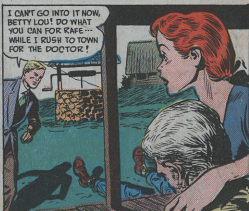




"AS RAPE CLANTON SLUMPED IN HIS CHAIR...AND BOB LUNGED TO SUPPORT HIM..."

STEADY, CLANTON! I'M SORRY THIS HAD TO COME OUT WHEN YOU'RE TOO OLD TO STAND THE SHOCK...BUT **YOU** SHOULD HAVE THOUGHT OF THAT TWENTY YEARS AGO!

BOB, FOR THE LOVE OF HEAVEN...
WHAT'S THIS ALL ABOUT?



I CAN'T GO INTO IT NOW, BETTY LOU! DO WHAT YOU CAN FOR RAPE... WHILE I RUSH TO TOWN FOR THE DOCTOR!



IT'S...LIKE BEING HAUNTED! IT'S A...JUDGMENT, THAT'S WHAT IT IS!

PA CLANTON, I CAN'T GUESS WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT! BUT IF YOU HAVE ANYTHING ON YOUR CONSCIENCE... **YOU'D BETTER COME OUT WITH IT!**



LISTEN...LISTEN, GAL...I AIN'T GOT LONG TO TALK... BACK TWENTY YEARS AGO, I LEARNED THAT JESSE DAVIS OWED SEVERAL YEARS' TAXES ON HIS FARM! THAT'S WHY I MURDERED HIM...GO'S I COULD BUY THE LAND CHEAP ON A TAX TITLE! AND I TOOK JESSE'S WATCH...THAT WATCH...TO MAKE THE SHOOTIN' LOOK LIKE AN ORDINARY ROBBERY!



"AS RAPE'S HEAD SAGGED FOR THE LAST TIME, I FOUND MYSELF STARING AT THE INSIDE OF THE WATCH CASE! IT HAD A FADED PHOTOGRAPH...THE FACE OF A MAN I HAD NEVER KNOWN...THE FACE OF A MAN I HAD LEARNED TO LOVE!"

THEY'RE AS MUCH ALIKE AS TWO PEAS IN A POD! THIS IS JESSE DAVIS, THE MAN OLD RAPE KILLED...AND **BOB IS HIS SON!**



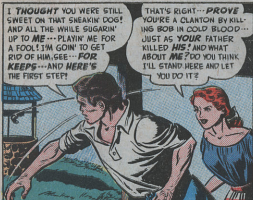
FIRST OFF... LET'S HAVE IT!

OH!



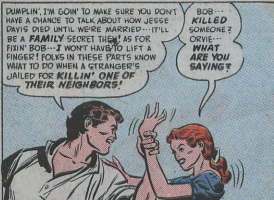
SO **THIS** IS WHAT BROUGHT THE STRANGER TO SINGIN' BROOK! WELL, THE LAND'S MINE NOW...AND IT'S GOIN' TO STAY MINE!

IS **THAT** ALL YOU FEEL ABOUT RAPE'S DEATH...THAT FINALLY YOU OWN THE PROPERTY HE MURDERED FOR? LOOK AT YOUR FATHER, ORVE...AND YOU'LL SEE THAT BOB'S ALREADY GOTTEN WHAT HE CAME TO SINGIN' BROOK FOR...**JUSTICE!** THERE'S NOTHING ELSE HE WANTS **HERE!** HE DOESN'T WANT THE LAND...AND THANKS TO YOU...HE CERTAINLY DOESN'T WANT **ME!**



I THOUGHT YOU WERE STILL SWEET ON THAT SNEAKIN' DOG! AND ALL THE WHILE SUGARIN' UP TO ME... PLAYIN' ME FOR A FOOL! I'M GOIN' TO GET RID OF HIM, SEE... **FOR KEEPS... AND HERE'S THE FIRST STEP!**

THAT'S RIGHT... **PROVE** YOU'RE A CLANTON BY KILLIN' BOB IN COLD BLOOD... JUST AS **YOUR FATHER** KILLED **HIS!** AND WHAT ABOUT **ME?** DO YOU THINK I'LL STAND HERE AND LET YOU DO IT?



DUMPLIN', I'M GOIN' TO MAKE SURE YOU DON'T HAVE A CHANCE TO TALK ABOUT HOW JESSE DAVIS DIED UNTIL WE'RE MARRIED... IT'LL BE A **FAMILY SECRET** THEN! AS FOR FIVE! BOB... I WON'T HAVE TO LIFT A FINGER! FOLKS IN THESE PARTS KNOW WHAT TO DO WHEN A STRANGER'S JAILED FOR **KILLIN' ONE OF THEIR NEIGHBORS!**

BOB... **KILLED SOMEONE?** ORVIE... **WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?**



I'M SAVIN' THAT PA DIED AFTER THAT STRANGER BELTED HIM... AND WHO'S GOIN' TO GAV DIFFERENT? CAN YOU PICTURE ANY-ONE AROUND HERE BELIEVIN' **HIM?**

I WON'T LET YOU... I WON'T! YEG, I LOVE HIM... LOVE HIM ENOUGH TO **DIE** FOR HIM... YOU MIGNERABLE COWARD!



A MOMENT LATER... WITH THE HEAVY CELLAR DOOR LATCHED SHUT...

I KNOW GINGING BROOK... AND I KNOW HOW MUCH CHANCE BOB WILL HAVE TO TELL **HIS** STORY AFTER ORVIE'S WHIPPED UP MOB SPIRIT! I'VE GOT TO GET OUT... **I'VE GOT TO!**

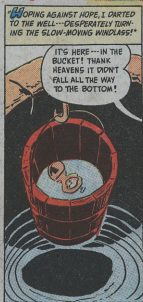


"PRACTICALLY TURNING TO THE ROCK FOUNDATION... I PUT EVERY OUNCE OF MY STRENGTH INTO DISLODGING THE HEAVY STONES! FINALLY..."

I... I CAN HARDLY MOVE... BUT THIS IS NO TIME TO GIVE UP! I'M A TYLER... **AND I'M NOT THROUGH YET!**



I'M READY... BUT WILL THE LYNCH MOB BELIEVE **ME?** I KNOW WHAT EVERY SECOND MEANS... AND YET THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO **PROVE BOB'S STORY! I'VE GOT TO FIND THE WATCH!**



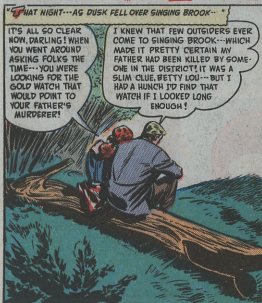
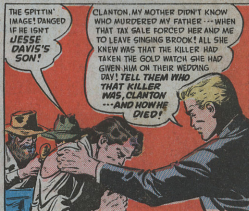
"HOPING AGAINST HOPE, I DARTED TO THE WELL... DESPERATELY TURNING THE GLOW-MOVING WINDLASS!"

IT'S HERE... IN THE BUCKET! THANK HEAVENS IT DIDN'T FALL ALL THE WAY TO THE BOTTOM!



"TWIGS CRACKED BEFORE ME AS I RUSHED THROUGH THE WOODS... GLANCING FOR JUST A SECOND AT THE FALLEN TREE WHERE I USED TO MEET BOB... PRAYING FOR JUST A SECOND THAT I'D BE IN TIME TO **SAVE HIM!**"

DARLING, I WON'T GIVE YOU UP! NOT TO ORVIE... NOT TO A **HUNDRED ORVIES!**



While Waiting To WED



SO YOU'RE **ENGAGED**--AND NOW YOU'RE WONDERING WHAT YOUR LIFE IS GOING TO BE LIKE, WHILE YOU'RE **WAITING TO WED**! WELL, THERE'LL BE MANY ANXIOUS MOMENTS AND PROBLEMS--AND ANTICIPATING THEM BEFOREHAND WILL EASE YOUR THORNY PATH TO BLISSFUL MATRIMONY!

PREPARE YOURSELF FOR DAY-DREAMING ABOUT YOUR BELOVED! BETTER CONFINE IT TO YOUR LEISURE MOMENTS, THOUGH--OR YOU MAY FIND YOUR ENGAGEMENT PERIOD LONGER THAN YOU THOUGHT, BECAUSE YOU'VE LOST YOUR JOB!



DON'T KEEP WORRYING THAT SHE'LL CHANGE HER MIND ABOUT YOU--THAT SHE'LL FIND OUT YOU DON'T COME UP TO HER IDEALS! JUST REALIZE THAT **NO ONE IS PERFECT**--TAKE HER OFF THAT PEDESTAL--AND YOU'LL STOP WORRYING ABOUT WHETHER **YOU'RE WORTHY OF HER!**

LONG ENGAGEMENTS CAN BECOME IRKSOME--AND IRRITABILITIES NORMALLY NOT IN A PERSON'S MAKEUP MAY SUDDENLY APPEAR!

IF YOU'RE ON GUARD AGAINST LETTING LITTLE QUARRELS GROW INTO BIG ONES, YOU WON'T MAKE THE MISTAKE OF LETTING BLOWUPS LIKE **THIS** OCCUR!

HOW **DARE** YOU SHOUT AT ME LIKE THAT! I... I **HATE** YOU-- I NEVER WANT TO SEE YOU AGAIN!

THAT SUITS ME FINE-- YOU CAN CONSIDER OUR ENGAGEMENT BROKEN!

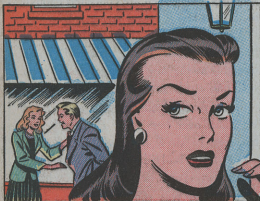


I'M SORRY, DARLING-- THAT SILLY ARGUMENT WAS ALL MY FAULT!

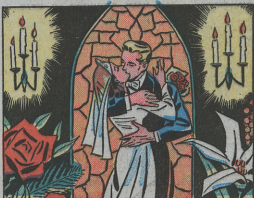
NO, I'M TO BLAME--AND IT WON'T EVER HAPPEN AGAIN!



BUT IF YOU KEEP YOUR HEADS, IF YOU REALIZE THAT YOU REALLY **CARE** FOR EACH OTHER, YOU'LL SOON FIND IT WAS JUST A MINOR LOVER'S QUARREL-- THAT CAN BE SETTLED WITH A KISS!



ABOVE ALL, DON'T BECOME SO JEALOUS THAT YOU CAN'T EVEN BEAR THE THOUGHT OF YOUR SWEET-HEART SO MUCH AS SMILING AT ANYONE ELSE-- OR YOU'LL FIND THAT YOU'RE **DRIVING** HIM INTO SOMEONE ELSE'S ARMS!



BUT IF YOU FOLLOW THESE SUGGESTIONS, IF YOU PATIENTLY TRY TO UNDERSTAND YOUR SWEETHEART'S POINT OF VIEW INSTEAD OF SELFISHLY INSISTING ON YOUR OWN, YOU'LL FIND THAT THE LONG WAIT IS OVER ALMOST BEFORE YOU KNOW IT-- AND THE **BLISSFUL WEDDING HOUR HAS COME!**

TWO at ONE GAME

LORA was aware of Tom's eyes upon her, in the way that every woman is aware of such a thing. He was at the far end of the room, cornered by a vivacious brunette who was trying very hard to hold his attention. But every so often, his eyes would find Lora and he would smile.

And Lora's heart would respond to that smile readily, fervently. For she had always admired Tom, but she had never hoped . . . *dared* hope . . . that Tom could possibly feel the same way about her. Yet here they were, thrown together at a gay house-warming, surrounded by fifty people, and Tom's eyes were speaking to her, saying "Why aren't we two together?"

Now Tom was smiling at the brunette and saying something, to her evident disappointment. He was turning away, threading a path through the crowd. He . . . he was coming to her!

"Hello." The depth of his voice was like a caress, bearing out the promise of his glance. "It's very crowded in here, isn't it? Why don't we try for some fresh air in the garden?"

It was crazy. It was magic. Lora hardly knew what she answered as she slipped her hand through Tom's arm.

In the soft night, the garden was a place of enchantment, misty and perfumed. Silently, Lora and Tom followed the flagstoned walk to the rose arbor. Somewhere nearby, a fountain tinkled.

"Lora!" Tom said. And then again, "Lora!" His arms reached for her, drew her towards him. A hundred things flash-

ed through her mind . . . hardly know each other . . . unconventional . . . what does he think I am . . . this isn't like me.

And then all thinking stopped as their lips met. Lora returned Tom's kiss warmly and eagerly, her pulses beating like drums. Suddenly, the magic spell was broken. From the house, a voice called, "Tom! Hey, Tom! Where are you?"

To Lora, the crowded room was vague and hazy when they returned. Everything seemed far-away and unreal . . . except that kiss. And Tom! But wasn't that *his* voice, filled with amusement, telling some sort of story to two or three men?

Panic, shock, fury as Lora listened! "I'd met her once or twice," he was saying, "and I never suspected such emotional depths! What a kiss!"

He was talking about *her*! Boasting of a conquest! With a wild desire to save herself and her pride, Lora joined a group of girls and began to chatter. Her voice was almost hysterically high as she said, "I hope he didn't take that kiss seriously. Some men are conceited enough to think a kiss is *meant* seriously!"

He had heard, as Lora had meant him to. "What have I done?" Lora thought, as she saw the anger in his face, saw him stride toward her purposefully.

Tom reached out an arm and closed his hand over her wrist. Pulling her to her feet, he drew her close and gritted, "You little fool!" And then, in plain view of everyone, he kissed her . . . hard.

This kiss was different. It was both an apology and a declaration of love . . . *from both to both!*

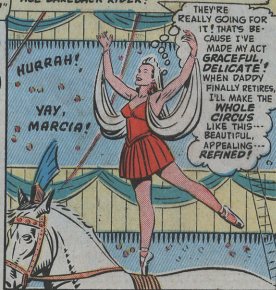
SAVAGE SWEETHEART



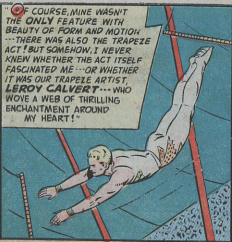
FROM INFANCY ON, I WAS SURROUNDED BY THE EXCITING SIGHTS AND SOUNDS OF THE BIG TOP ... OF THE HALLEY CIRCUS! IT WAS A PLACE OF EXCITEMENT ... OF RAW EMOTIONS ... OF FASCINATION!



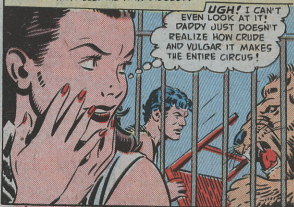
"THE YEARS PASSED! I WAS 18 ... AND MY AMBITION WAS REALIZED! MARCIA HALLEY ... THE CIRCUS'S ACE BAREBACK RIDER!"



"OF COURSE, MINE WASN'T THE ONLY FEATURE WITH BEAUTY OF FORM AND MOTION...THERE WAS ALSO THE TRAPEZE ACT! BUT SOMEHOW, I NEVER KNEW WHETHER THE ACT ITSELF FASCINATED ME...OR WHETHER IT WAS OUR TRAPEZE ARTIST, **LEROEY CALVERT**...WHO WOVE A WEB OF THRILLING ENCHANTMENT AROUND MY HEART!"



"THEN, THERE WERE OTHER SPECIALTIES...LIKE THE **LION-TAMING ACT**...WHOSE SAVAGERY AND BRUTISHNESS REPELLED ME, FILLED ME WITH DISGUST!"



"UGH! I CAN'T EVEN LOOK AT IT! DADDY JUST DOESN'T REALIZE HOW CRUDE AND VULGAR IT MAKES THE ENTIRE CIRCUS!"

"AND THERE WAS SOMETHING ABOUT DAVID, THE NEW LION-TAMER, THAT ALSO REPELLED ME! I'D ALWAYS MANAGED TO STAY CLEAR OF HIM, UNTIL ONE DAY..."

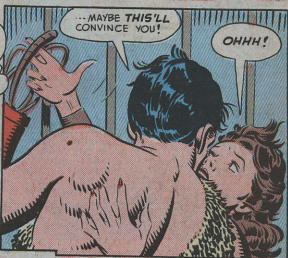
"GET AWAY...KEEP YOUR HANDS OFF ME!"

"NOT UNTIL I FIND OUT WHY YOU'RE ALWAYS AVOIDING ME...WHY YOU LOOK AT ME WITH SUCH **HATRED**! I COULD REALLY GO FOR A GIRL LIKE YOU...AND IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME..."



"...MAYBE THIS'LL CONVINCE YOU!"

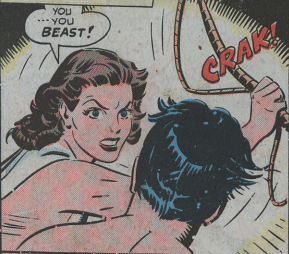
"OHHH!"



"MY HEART POUNDED WILDLY, DESPERATELY, AS I BROKE HIS GRIP...SNATCHED UP A NEARBY WHIP! THEN, BLINDED BY FURY..."

"YOU...YOU BEAST!"

"CRACK!"



"I HAD HOPED TO SEE HIM FLINCH, CRY OUT WITH PAIN...BUT THERE HE STOOD, GRINNING AT ME SARDONICALLY! BESIDE MYSELF WITH A WILD RAGE, I CRIED OUT..."

"I DESPISE YOU! YOU'RE JUST A BRUTE...AN ANIMAL...LIKE THOSE LIONS YOU LIVE WITH! YOU BELONG WITH THEM...EXCEPT THAT YOU'RE THE ONE WHO SHOULD BE WHIPPED AND TAMED!"

"WELL, YOU'VE WHIPPED ME...WHY DON'T YOU TRY YOUR HAND AT TAMING ME NOW?"



"**F**RUSTRATED, I TURNED AWAY...RAN! A BITTER SELF-PITY HAD OVERCOME ME! WHY COULDN'T A MAN LIKE LEROY KISS ME, INSTEAD OF THAT... THAT BARBARIAN! BUT LEROY...PERHAPS IF I SHOWED THAT I WAS INTERESTED IN HIM..."

OH, LEROY, I... I JUST LOVE YOUR NEW ACT! COULD...COULD YOU SHOW ME HOW IT'S DONE?

ER...SOME OTHER TIME, MAYBE! I'VE GOT TO SEE SOMEONE IN TOWN!



BATTERLY, I WATCHED HIM LEAVE...WONDERING WHERE HE WAS GOING! IF ONLY I HAD KNOWN!

BLAST IT...I'VE LOST AGAIN! HOW ABOUT ANOTHER I.O.U.?

NO DICE, CALVERT! YOU ALREADY OWE US 3,000 SMACKERS... AND WE'RE GONNA COLLECT TONIGHT...OR ELSE!



BUT I...I DON'T HAVE IT! YOU KNOW THE CIRCUS DOESN'T PAY ME THAT KIND OF MONEY... YOU'LL HAVE TO GIVE ME MORE TIME!

FORGET IT! YOU'RE GOIN' ON A **ONE-WAY RIDE**...UNLESS YOU'RE WILLIN' TA PLAY BALL WITH US! WE'VE BEEN TRYIN' TA TALK OLD MAN HALLEY INTO LETTIN' US RUN CROOKED GAMBLIN' GAMES ON HIS CIRCUS MIDWAY...BUT THE OLD COOT WON'T LISTEN TO REASON!



WE COULD **CLEAN UP**...BECAUSE EVERYONE TRUSTS THE OLD BOY! **HONEST PETE HALLEY**, THEY CALL HIM...AND THE SUCKERS WOULD NEVER DREAM THAT ANY GAMES ON **HIS** MIDWAY WERE CROOKED! WE'LL FORGET ABOUT THE 3,000 AND CUT YOU IN ON THE PROFITS... **IF YOU CAN TALK HALLEY INTO OKAYIN' OUR SCHEME!**

SURE, MIKE...YOU CAN COUNT ON ME! I'LL MAKE HIM OKAY IT...**ONE WAY OR ANOTHER!**



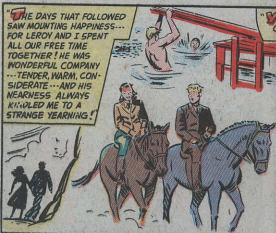
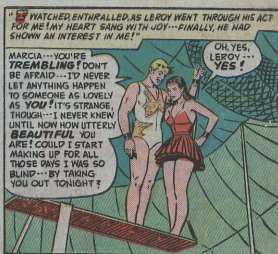
BUT... THE ANSWER IS **NO**, LEROY...IT'S OUT OF THE QUESTION! AND I'M SURPRISED THAT **YOU** WOULD SUGGEST ANYTHING AS CROOKED AS THAT!

BAH, I CAN'T ARGUE WITH THE STUBBORN OLD FOOL! I'LL HAVE TO THINK OF SOMETHING ELSE FAST...IF I'M TO SAVE MY SKIN!



SAY, **THERE'S** MY ANSWER! I'VE GOT IT--ALL I HAVE TO DO IS PLAY UP TO HER, AND THEN...

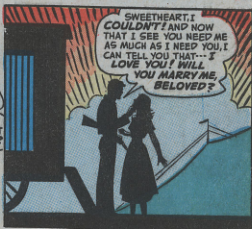
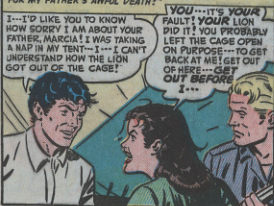




"THE HORRIBLE SIGHT SEARED ITSELF INTO MY BRAIN. LEFT ME SOBBING HYSTERICALLY! AND THEN, AT THE HEIGHT OF MY GRIEF, I FELT A COMFORTING ARM AROUND ME, HEARD A SOOTHING VOICE--"



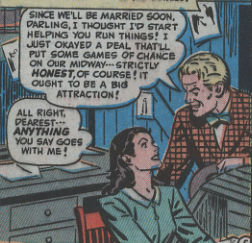
"THEN I HEARD ANOTHER VOICE--A HATED VOICE. AND FELT MY ANGUISH SUDDENLY OVERFLOWING INTO A WILD RAGE AT THE ONLY MAN WHO COULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR MY FATHER'S AWFUL DEATH!"



"AS HIS LIPS SWEETLY, TENDERLY FOUND MINE, I KNEW THAT I HAD LOST A FATHER---BUT WON THE MAN I LOVED!"



"IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOWED, BUDDING HAPPINESS SLOWLY DROINED MY GRIEF---ESPECIALLY SINCE I KNEW FATHER WOULD HAVE WANTED IT TO BE THIS WAY! AND AS BEST I COULD, I TRIED TAKING OVER THE MANAGEMENT OF THE CIRCUS---BUT WITH MY HEAD IN A WHIRL, I BEGAN LETTING LEROY HANDLE THE DETAILS!"



AND INCIDENTALLY, I'VE ALREADY MADE OUT MY WILL IN FAVOR OF YOU... JUST IN CASE SOMETHING HAPPENS! YOU MIGHT AS WELL MAKE OUT YOURS, TOO... **TO YOUR FUTURE HUSBAND!**

ALL RIGHT... JUST TO HUMOR YOU! BUT NOTHING CAN **POSSIBLY** HAPPEN TO SPOIL OUR HAPPINESS **NOW!**



"BUT AGAIN THERE WAS ONE JARRING NOTE TO THE SYMPHONY OF BLISS THAT NOW MADE UP MY LIFE... **DAVID!**"

YOU! HOW DARE YOU EVEN SPEAK TO ME!

LISTEN, MARCIA... YOU'VE GOT TO KNOW! THOSE GAMBLING GAMES LEROY INSTALLED ON THE MIDWAY ARE **CROOKED!** YOUR FATHER WOULD NEVER HAVE HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH THAT GAMBLING SYNDICATE THAT RUNS THEM!... IT'S BEGINNING TO LOOK AS IF HIS DEATH WAS VERY **CONVENIENT** FOR SOME PEOPLE!



WHY, YOU... **YOU...!**

LET HIM RAVE, MARCIA! HE'LL HAVE OTHER THINGS TO OCCUPY HIS ATTENTION TOMORROW! BECAUSE THAT'S WHEN THAT NEW LION I ORDERED ARRIVES... AN **UNTAMED LION!** MAYBE **NOW** WE'LL SEE HOW MUCH OF A **MAN** HE IS!



"NEXT DAY, I WATCHED THE LION'S FIRST TAMING SESSION... HOPING THAT THE MAN I LOATHED WOULD FINALLY MEET HIS MATCH, SHOW SIGNS OF THE FEAR AND COWARDICE I WAS CONVINCED LURKED WITHIN HIM!"

BACK, BOY, **BACK!** **BACK!**

RRRRARRGH!

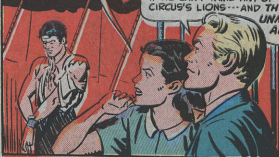
OH, IT... IT'S GOING TO RIP HIM TO SHREDS!



"WHAT WAS THAT TWINGE THAT FLEETLY GRIPPED MY HEART... PITY, FEAR, ANXIETY... OR **SOMETHING ELSE?** AND WHY SHOULD I PITY OR FEAR FOR THE SAFETY OF A MAN I **HATED?** CONFUSED, TROUBLED, I TURNED TO THE ONE SURE ELEMENT IN MY LIFE... **THE MAN I LOVED!**"

OH, LEROY... LET'S GET AWAY FROM HERE!

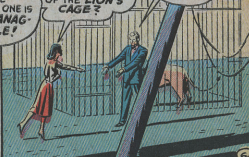
ALL RIGHT, DARLING... NOW THAT I'VE SEEN WHAT A **MAN-EATER** THAT BEAST IS! IT'S JUST WHAT I WANTED... BECAUSE THAT RAT'S CONTRACT CAN BE BROKEN IF HE CAN'T TAME ANY OF THE CIRCUS'S LIONS... AND **THIS ONE IS UNMANAGABLE!**

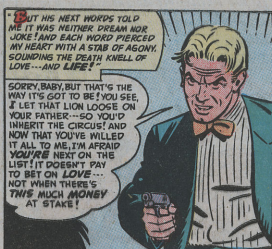


"THERE WAS NO PERFORMANCE THAT NIGHT, AND LEROY LET ALL THE HELP GO OFF TO TOWN! AND WHEN HE WHISPERED THAT HE WANTED TO MEET ME AT TEN, I KNEW HE WANTED US TO BE COMPLETELY, ROMANTICALLY ALONE!"

HELLO, DARLING! ISN'T THIS **THRILLING**... HAVING THE WHOLE CIRCUS TO **OURSELVES?**... BUT WHY ON EARTH DID YOU WANT ME TO MEET YOU IN FRONT OF THE **LION'S CAGE?**

BECAUSE IT'S SUCH A ROMANTIC SETTING... **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST!** NOW COME HERE, AND I'LL TELL YOU HOW BEAUTIFUL YOU ARE, AND...





WAVES OF BLACKNESS OVERWHELMED ME, AND I FELT MYSELF BEING THRUST ROUGHLY INTO THE CAGE! THEN, FIGHTING THE PAIN, TRYING TO SHAKE OFF UNCONSCIOUSNESS, I LOOKED UP... AND SAW...



'T WAS DAVID... PLUNGING RECKLESSLY IN TO RISK HIS LIFE FOR SOMEONE WHO'D HATED HIM! WHY, WHY WAS HE DOING THIS?'



ALL KILLER, EH... AND YOU CAN'T BE TAMED! IT'LL BE A FIGHT TO THE FINISH... AND I'VE ONLY GOT MY KNIFE TO FIGHT WITH!

HE... HE'S GOT THE COURAGE OF A LION HIMSELF... RISKING HIS ALL FOR ME! I... I'VE MISJUDGED HIM... BUT IT'S TOO LATE!

GR-RRR!

'MAN AGAINST FIERCE LION... NO. DAVID DIDN'T HAVE A CHANCE! BUT... HE WAS SIDESTEPPING THE HUGE BEAST'S CHARGE, LEAPING COURAGEOUSLY ONTO ITS BACK! HE WAS FIGHTING... ON EQUAL TERMS! THE POWER IN HIM... IT WAS THAT WHICH I HAD FEARED. NOT HIS SAVAGERY!'

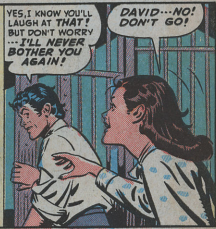


'DOWN SWEEPED HIS MIGHTY ARM... DOWN AND DOWN AGAIN! I WATCHED BREATHLESSLY, SWEEPED UP BY THE MAN'S SHEER MAGNETISM... HIS MIGHTY POWER! AND THE GREAT BEAST SANK TO THE FLOOR... SHUDDERED... WAS STILL!'



I... I'VE DONE IT... FOR THE GIRL I LOVE!

'S... THE GIRL HE... LOVED? THEN... THERE WAS A REAL HEART BE- NEATH THAT SAVAGE EXTERIOR! AND I HAD MISTAKEN HIS INITIAL ADVANCES TOWARDS ME AS THOSE OF A CRUDE BARBARIAN! SUDDENLY THE TRUTH STRUCK HOME WITH TRIP- HAMMER FORCE... THAT I'D NEVER HATED HIM... BUT FEARED THE WILD ATTRACTION THAT HAD REACHED TOWARD ME COMPELLINGLY!'



YES, I KNOW YOU'LL LAUGH AT THAT! BUT DON'T WORRY... I'LL NEVER BOTHER YOU AGAIN!

DAVID... NO! DON'T GO!

I... I DON'T KNOW HOW TO SAY IT... MY HEAD'S IN A WHIRL! BUT I CAN'T LAUGH AT THE MAN WHO RISKED HIS LIFE TO SAVE MINE... NOT WHEN MY HEART'S CRYING OUT WITHIN ME! IT'S TELLING ME WHAT A FOOL I'VE BEEN TO BLIND MYSELF TO WHAT I WAS AFRAID TO SEE IN YOUR EYES! AND IT'S TELLING ME SOMETHING MORE, DAVID... THAT I'VE LOVED YOU FROM THE BEGINNING!



MARCIA... DARLING!

'F WAS IN HIS ARMS THEN, CRUSHED IN THE FERVENT EMBRACE FOR WHICH I'D HUNGRED! HIS LIPS FOUND MINE... AND I KNEW THE SOUL-SWEEPING RAPTURE OF A HEART THAT HAD FOUND ITS MATE! YES, MINE WAS A SAVAGE SWEETHEART... AND A LOVE THAT WOULD ENDURE FOREVER!'



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